

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## CELEBRATING EARTH DAY

### HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 1998*

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of Earth Day. Today, we observe and celebrate the twenty-eighth annual Earth Day. Every year on this date, the people of our nation and across the globe focus their attention on the environment. The spring observation of Earth Day gives us the opportunity to renew our commitments to environmental preservation with activities from tree plantings to workshops and community clean-ups. I have long been an advocate of conservation and environmental protection, and I am particularly proud to lend my voice to this celebration.

Now more than ever, Americans enjoy the benefits of our country's natural resources, from our National Parks to our forests, lakes, rivers, and beaches. Environmental protection is consistently recognized as an overwhelming concern of the American public. A new study released yesterday affirms that environmental concerns span generations, from teenagers to baby boomers. Earth Day offers us the opportunity to continue the challenging task of protecting our natural resources. I believe that it is the responsibility of Congress to enact legislation to help create a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment. We must work to ensure that our children and future generations can live in a clean environment.

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, we have made significant progress in preserving our environment. Much has been accomplished in terms of protecting our natural resources and cleaning our environment. Because of the diligence of many, our land, air, and water are cleaner. Species such as the bald eagle have been saved from the brink of extinction. However, there is much work to be done, both nationally and internationally. The environment and our health are threatened more than ever. For example, a study released this week indicates that a mass extinction of plants and animals is currently underway. This rate of loss, perhaps up to 20% of all species in the next 30 years, is much greater than at any time in history. A mass extinction of this magnitude could pose a major threat to humans in the next century. Earth Day offers us the opportunity to applaud our progress, but more importantly, today's celebration allows us to renew our commitment to the challenges facing our planet. It is important to raise the awareness about the continued threats to our environment, and the positive steps that we can take to face these hazards.

I consider environmental protection to be a national priority. We must continue to work for the preservation of our natural resources and protection of the public's health. As Henry David Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads." The bounty of nature cannot be wasted, and we must preserve and protect this treasure for

future generations. The hard work of our nation will lead to a healthier world to live and flourish. Today, Earth Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to a cleaner world.

## SPACE POLICY

### HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 1998*

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, April 15, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

#### EXPLORING THE FINAL FRONTIER

The American public has had an abiding fascination with space exploration. When I first came to Congress in 1965, the public's attention was focused on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) efforts to put a man on the moon. Hoosiers had a special interest in the Apollo program because many of the astronauts, including Gus Grissom, had ties to Indiana.

While humans haven't set foot on the moon in over a generation, space-related stories continue to hold our attention, whether those stories involve photographs from the surface of Mars, or the recent detection of ice on the moon, or the images from deep space produced by the Hubble Telescope, or the announcement that Senator John Glenn will return to space this fall. The recent prediction, which has now been discredited, that an asteroid might collide with the Earth early next century dominated the news for several days.

Space exploration continues to enjoy widespread public support. The challenge for NASA will be to achieve its objectives over the next 20 years, including the building of a Space Station and possibly a human mission to Mars, in an era of constrained federal budgets. NASA budgets, for example, have been relatively flat in recent years.

NASA has worked to streamline its operations by cutting costs, shifting more responsibilities to the private sector, and partnering with other countries. It remains to be seen, however, whether those efforts will succeed in bringing NASA's ambitious program in line with budget realities.

#### MAJOR NASA PROGRAMS

The current NASA budget, \$13.6 billion, represents less than one percent of total federal spending. NASA's proposals for the next few years include three major components:

*Space Station:* The International Space Station is to be a configuration of laboratories placed in orbit by the U.S., Russia and other international partners that will allow astronauts to live and work in space for months at a time. Originally planned to be operational by 1994, the Space Station has undergone a number of redesigns, delays and cost overruns. The current plan calls for assembly of the station to begin later this year and be completed by 2003. Total cost estimates for the project, including previous work, design, assembly and operation, range from \$30 billion (a NASA estimate) to \$94 billion (a General Accounting Office estimate).

The Space Station has been mired in controversy for the last several years. Support-

ers say that the station is critical to future exploration of space, particularly human exploration, and to scientific advances in materials, biomedicine and agriculture. Critics, including me, respond that the program is too costly and poorly managed, that it diverts limited federal resources from other NASA programs as well as other domestic programs, and that the amount of research that can be conducted on the redesigned station is not worth the investment.

*Earth observation:* Another major NASA program, called Mission to Planet Earth, involves a series of satellites to be launched over the next several years to collect environmental data on the Earth. The goal of the program is to increase our understanding of the Earth's natural processes and how humans might be affecting them. The program will study such problems as ozone depletion, deforestation, and global warming. The satellites, the first of which will be launched in June, will collect data ranging from surface temperatures and cloud structure to solar radiation and carbon monoxide.

*Study of the planets:* NASA has launched many spacecraft over the years to study other planets in our solar system. Robotic probes have visited all the planets in the solar system, except Pluto. Galileo, launched in 1989, reached Jupiter in 1995 and is successfully sending back data about the planet and its moons. A similar space probe called Cassini was launched in 1997 to explore Saturn and is scheduled to arrive at the planet in 2004.

Current attention, however, has focused on NASA's study of Mars. Last July the Mars Pathfinder space probe landed on the surface of the "Red Planet", capturing video footage of the planet. A second spacecraft, the Mars Global Surveyor (MGS), arrived at Mars last September and will gather data on the planet from orbit. MGS is the first in a series of "Mars Surveyor" spacecraft which are scheduled to be launched at 26-month intervals through the year 2005. The intensive analysis of Mars may set the stage for future human exploration in the next century, although the cost of such an effort would likely run into the hundreds of billions of dollars.

#### OUTLOOK

Pressures to keep down overall spending on space have had important consequences for how NASA manages its programs. First, NASA is placing increased emphasis on international cooperation in space. Constrained budgets in the U.S. and elsewhere will continue to bring countries together in the name of space exploration and research. My sense is that the U.S. will continue to lead space-related efforts, but the end of the Cold War has certainly created new opportunities for international partnerships.

Second, NASA is looking increasingly to private sector involvement in space programs to help lower costs and spur innovation. The private sector is already heavily involved in satellite launching and operations for communications and imaging. Other potential commercial space activities are microgravity materials processing and space tourism.

#### CONCLUSION

I believe that we have a basic need to explore the final frontier. The American people have a great romance with space. They watch the astronauts dance through the

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